

Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Survey No. B-4867

1. Name

Historic 612 - 626 South Port Street
and / common

2. Location

street & number 612 - 626 South Port Street
city, town Baltimore
state & zip code Maryland 21231 county

3. Classification

Category
☐ district
☒ building(s)
☐ structure
☐ site
☐ object

Ownership
☐ public
☒ private
☐ both
Public Acquisition
☐ in process
☐ being considered
☐ not applicable

Status
☒ occupied
☐ unoccupied
☐ work in progress
Accessible
☒ yes: restricted
☐ yes: unrestricted
☐ no

Present Use
☐ agriculture
☐ commercial
☐ educational
☐ entertainment
☐ government
☐ industrial
☐ military
☐ museum
☐ park
☒ private residence
☐ religious
☐ scientific
☐ transportation
☐ other:

4. Owner of Property

name
street & number telephone
city, town state & zip code

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Baltimore City Land Records liber
street & number Clarence Mitchell Courthouse folio
city, town Baltimore State Maryland

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title
date federal state county local
depository for survey records
city, town state & zip code

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Survey No. B-4867

7. Description

Condition

☐ excellent
☒ good
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated
☐ ruins
☐ unexposed

Check One

☐ unaltered
☒ altered

Check One

☒ original site
☐ moved:
date of move: _____

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

The west side of the 600 block of S. Port St. has been built up with two different rows of two-story high, two-bay-wide houses, built at different periods. 610-616 S. Port St. are early-Italianate-style houses of the 1870s with shed roofs, but the original cornice have been covered over with formstone. 620-626 have the low-pitched gable roofs so typical of the early 1850s.

The row of early-Italianate-style houses at 610-616 S. Port St. have been covered with formstone and no original details can be discerned. The houses are two stories in height, 10' wide and occupy lots 65' deep. The shed roofs probably had early-Italianate-style cornices consisting of a crown molding supported by simple, scroll-sawn brackets or block modillions. Door and window openings probably had segmentally arched brick lintels and brick sills. All sash are 1/1 replacements and no original doors survive. The single-light doorway transoms are filled with stained glass bearing the house number. The houses sit on very high basements, lit by a double-light sash and with their own basement entrance. Entrances are reached by seven or eight formstoned steps set parallel with the façade.

620-626 are a group of four two-bay-wide, two-story brick houses with low-pitched gable roofs typical of the small alley houses built in Baltimore in the 1850s, often along especially narrow secondary alley streets running perpendicularly off the main "alley" street. In many cases, alley houses such as these are still occupied by working class families and many are still covered with the formstone put on in the 1950s or 1960s.

The houses are two stories in height, 13' wide and occupy lots 60' deep. Each two-room-deep house has a one-story brick rear kitchen addition somewhat narrower than the house. The pitch of the gable roof is especially low, a characteristic of this particular type of two-story, gable-roofed alley house. The houses are probably constructed in common bond, but all of the facades are now covered with formstone and aluminum siding. Originally each house had a simple brick corbelled cornice, but all are now obscured by the formstone and at 626, the gable roof has been "updated" by the addition of a Renaissance-Revival-style sheet metal cornice. Chimneys are located at the rear end of the kitchen addition.

The original door and window openings have been completely obscured by the formstone coverings and all windows are filled with replacement 1/1 sash. At 626 the original first floor window has been replaced by the more fashionable wider plate glass window with stained glass transom popular in the early 20th century (probably at the same time the sheet metal cornice was added). No original doors survive and the row shows a mix of replacement door styles, all surmounted by a single-light transom. The houses sit on high basements, lit by a tall sash. The entrances are reached by six brick or formstoned steps, set parallel to the facades. An arched sallyport running back between each pair of houses provides service access to the rear yards on lots that are back-to-back with those on the east side of Montford Ave.

The houses are basically two rooms deep, with the front room being entered directly from the front door. The front and back rooms of the first floor are separated by a wide opening, with the tightly winding, narrow stairs set in the rear room, in the space between the partition wall and the fireplace. The one-story rear addition served as the kitchen, with its own cooking fireplace.

8. Significance

Period	Area of significance	check one & justify			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theatre	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation	
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other: specify	

Specific dates

1865 - 1875

Builder/Architect

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

620 - 626 S. Port St. are significant as being representative of a surviving group of extremely modest two-story, gable-roofed houses built in Fells Point in the 1850s and 1860s to serve as inexpensive housing for the influx of newly arrived immigrant families seeking work in harbor-related activities or in the first small factories being built at this time. Most of these houses were located along narrow alley streets, or along even narrower courts. In terms of design, the houses are basically the descendants of earlier Federal-style working class housing built in the early decades of the century, but without the usual dormer story of such houses. Because there is no dormer story the roof slope is much less steep in these later versions of the style. The houses are surprisingly large for the type, with a main house consisting of two small rooms on each floor, with a centrally located, tightly winding, narrow staircase, and a rear kitchen addition. At the time of their construction, they were decidedly old-fashioned.

600 - 616 S. Port St. are slightly later houses built in the style popular in the 1870s—miniature versions of the Italianate-style houses with shed roofs and wooden bracketed cornices that began to be built in Baltimore's prosperous neighborhoods in the 1850s and 1860s.

The houses were built according to a pattern that was quite common to the city's working class neighborhoods of the period 1870 to 1910. Recognizing that workers held different levels of jobs (and pay), builders created a hierarchy of house sizes (and prices) in the new neighborhoods going up to serve the expanding factory districts ringing the harbor and northeast of the central city. Builders acquired anywhere from an eighth to a half of a city block and built 14' to 15'-wide two-story houses on the main streets, and smaller, 11' to 13'-wide two-story houses on the narrower streets bisecting the blocks. Typically, in this period, main street houses might sell for \$1,200 to \$1,500; small street houses for \$700 - \$900. In this case the builder was responsible for these old-fashioned houses on the west side of Port St. and also for the more stylish early Italianate-style houses on the north side of Fleet St.

The land originally belonged to the Patterson family as part of their 18th century estate, which also included the land given by the family to the city for Patterson Park. In the late 1860s the Patterson heirs began developing this block by leasing parcels to various builders who constructed modestly scaled and priced housing for the mainly German immigrant families who were settling near the port-related fledgling industries of Canton. Most of the houses, including these three, sold to mainly German-American semi-skilled tradesmen and laborers employed in nearby factories, who received mortgages from a variety of local building and loans, many of them sponsored by the German community.

9. Major Bibliographic References

Mary Ellen Hayward and Charles Belfoure, *The Baltimore Rowhouse*
(New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1999)

10. Geographic Data

Acreage of nominated property

Quadrangle name

Verbal boundary description and justification

11. Form Prepared by

Name / title Dr. Mary Ellen Hayward

Organization The Alley House Project

street & number 1306 Carrollton Ave.

city, town Baltimore

date

telephone

state & zip code Maryland 21204

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Md. Article 41, section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of property rights.

Return to:

DHCP/DHCD

Maryland Historical Trust

100 Community Place

Crownsville MD 21032-2023

B-4867

612-626 S. Port St

BALTO. MD

AVE.

AVE.

MONTFORD

45 MILTON

CANTON

ALICEANNA ST.

ST.

FOSTER

FAIT

AVE.

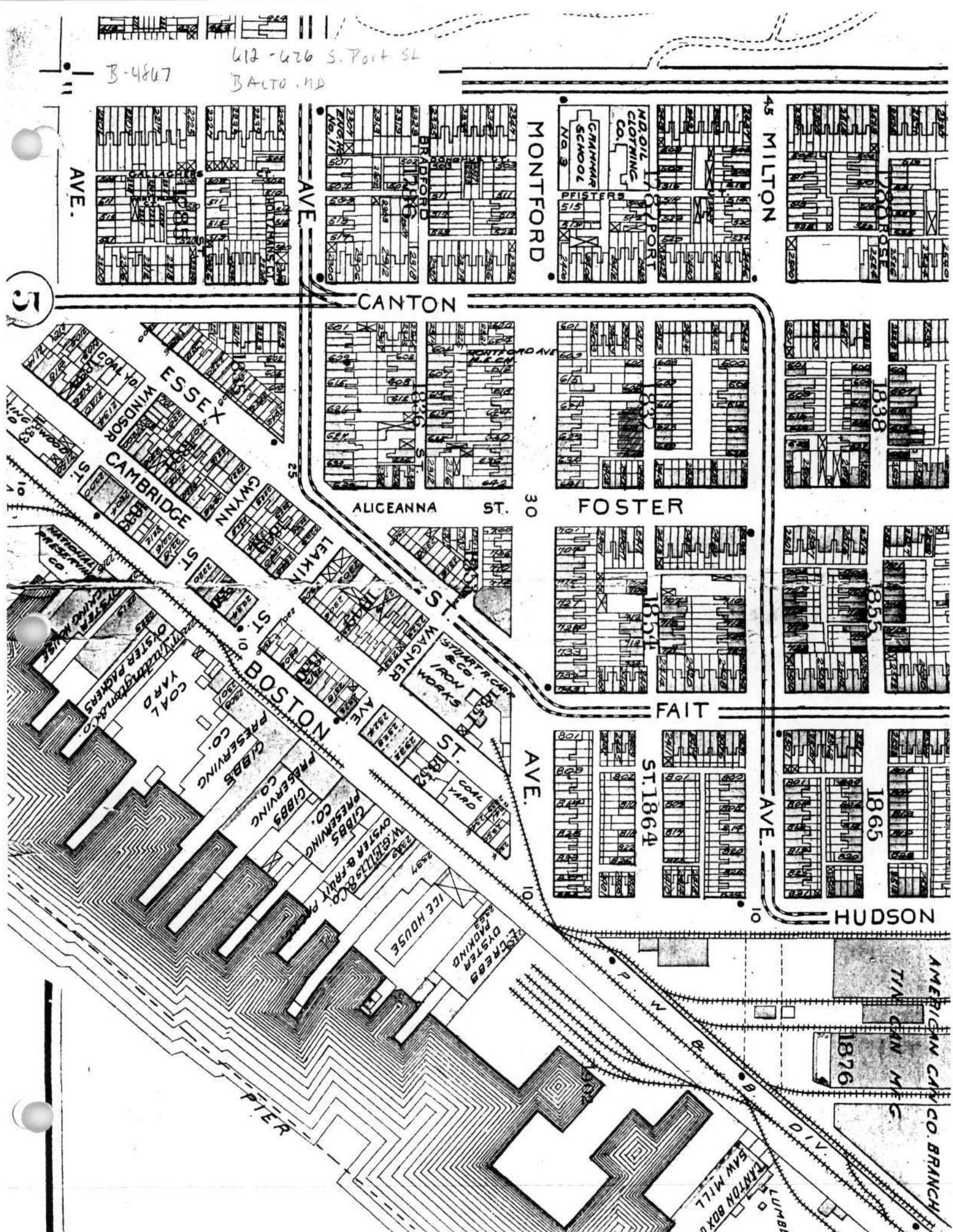
AVE.

HUDSON

PIER

CANTON BOX CO.
SAW MILL
LUMBER

AMERICAN CAN CO. BRANCH
TIN CAN MFG
1876



B-4867
612-626 S. Port Street
Block 1837 Lots 084-091
Baltimore City
Baltimore East Quad.





612-626 S. 1st

1000

B-4267

612-626 S. 1st St.

LA 10, 112

C. Belfrage

11/97

112

.00

130127



612-616 S. Put

HC-1

B-467

612-626 S. Post St.

BALTO. MD

C. Belfrage

10/47

2/2

31252 1000 2 2 2 2 2